



Economic and Social Council

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Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Sixteenth session

24-28 April 2017

Item 2 of the provisional agenda

Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

Provisional annotated agenda

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through leadership, action and means:
 - (a) Understanding the needs of local authorities and communities and supporting and equipping them for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - (b) Institutional leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - (c) Institutional arrangements for the Sustainable Development Goals;
 - (d) Development of principles of effective governance;
 - (e) Strategies for integrated action to achieve poverty eradication: implications for public institutions.
4. Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Committee.
5. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixteenth session.

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Annotations

1. Election of officers

The Committee will elect a Chair, three Vice-Chairs and a Rapporteur for the sixteenth session. The Chair, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteur constitute the Bureau. In accordance with established practice, the officers will continue to act as the Bureau in preparation for the seventeenth session for the duration of the current term, consulting with newly appointed Committee members.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters

The Committee is invited to adopt the agenda of its sixteenth session on the basis of the provisional agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2016/257.

The Committee is scheduled to meet from Monday to Friday, 24 to 28 April 2017. The morning meetings will be held from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and the afternoon meetings from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Informal meetings and events may be held at other times.

Documentation

Provisional annotated agenda (E/C.16/2017/1)

3. Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals through leadership, action and means

This is the second year of implementation of the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted in September 2015. At its fifteenth session, the Committee reflected on the implications of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for public administration and provided policy advice and a programmatic guide to the Economic and Social Council on the issue. Its work supported the formulation of Council resolution 2016/26 addressing, among other things, the role of public institutions, integrated policies for the Goals, participatory decision-making and inclusive service delivery, diversity and non-discrimination, oversight and accountability in the implementation of the Goals and public servants and the Goals. At its coordination and management meeting on 27 July 2016, the Council also endorsed the Committee's recommendation to examine, at its sixteenth session, the effective implementation of the Goals through leadership, action and means.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on successfully achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: what is to be done? (E/C.16/2017/2)

Conference room paper on implementation and follow-up to Economic and Social Council resolution 2016/26 on the report of the fifteenth session of the Committee

(a) Understanding the needs of local authorities and communities and supporting and equipping them for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

At its fifteenth session, the Committee emphasized that local authorities will play a critical role in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, given their proximity to the population and at the grassroots level, their role in delivering basic public services, and their ability to take integrated approaches. Countries should therefore enhance efforts to promote policy integration between levels of government and develop more robust national frameworks for sharing responsibilities and resources in the pursuit of common objectives. The Committee stressed in that regard that the responsibilities of local governments for implementing the Goals should be supported by adequate human and financial resources and capacities.

At its sixteenth session, the Committee will continue its consideration of the question of understanding the needs of local authorities and communities and supporting and equipping them for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on understanding the needs of local authorities and communities and supporting and equipping them for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (E/C.16/2017/3)

Conference room paper on transforming local authorities and communities into informed actors to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Conference room paper on local authorities and the Sustainable Development Goals: the case of the Russian Federation

(b) Institutional leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals

At its fifteenth session, the Committee agreed that implementing the Sustainable Development Goals requires effective and transformative leadership and that leadership at a high political level is a decisive factor. The Committee noted that practices of exemplary leadership include the sharing of an inspiring vision, anticipating future challenges, creating a road map, challenging the status quo and encouraging people to act with political buy-in and in partnership with other actors. At its sixteenth session, the Committee will continue its consideration of the question of institutional leadership and the Goals.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on institutional leadership and the Sustainable Development Goals (E/C.16/2017/4)

Conference room paper on engaging the bureaucracy in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals

(c) Institutional arrangements for the Sustainable Development Goals

At its fifteenth session, the Committee encouraged Governments to develop institutional arrangements and mechanisms for supporting the development and implementation of coherent and integrated policies for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, noting that doing so also requires sustained leadership and that cooperation, consultation, engagement, dialogue and partnership be made the *modus operandi* of public administrations and public servants. The Committee encouraged innovative efforts to build the capacities of public institutions for implementing the Goals in areas such as coherent policymaking, planning, implementation, foresight, evidence-based review of progress and the collection and use of statistics and data.

In addition, the Committee suggested that governments and other relevant actors sustain the promotion of creativity, innovation and excellence in public administration by, among other things, transforming administrative structures, processes, legislation and regulations on the basis of information and communications technology and the Internet. At its sixteenth session, the Committee will continue its consideration of the question of institutional arrangements for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on institutional arrangements for the Sustainable Development Goals (E/C.16/2017/5)

Report of the expert meeting on readying institutions and policies for integrated approaches to implementation of the 2030 Agenda, Vienna, 14 to 16 December 2016

Conference room paper on institutional arrangements for implementation of the 2030 Agenda at the national level

(d) Development of principles of effective governance

At its fifteenth session, the Committee decided to draft, with the assistance of the Secretariat, a set of principles of responsible and effective governance to inform the study of more specific issues that cohered with the Sustainable Development Goals and the priorities of the Economic and Social Council in order to serve as a normative baseline for future policy and practice and possibly inform a global research agenda for public administration and development. At its sixteenth session, the Committee may wish to consider possible core elements of principles of effective governance and propose a way forward.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat on moving towards a set of internationally recognized principles of effective governance (E/C.16/2017/6)

(e) Strategies for integrated action to achieve poverty eradication: implications for public institutions

In the 2030 Agenda, it was recognized that eradicating poverty in all its form and dimensions is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for

sustainable development. People living in poverty often face multiple types of deprivations and disadvantages, which lead them to being left behind as sustainable development proceeds. At its fifteenth session, the Committee recommended that national and local governments, in their first steps to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, identify implementation priorities, targets and institutional arrangements and determine who is at risk of being left behind, drawing on broad consultations and engagement with civil society, with specific consideration given to the institutional reforms necessary and adjustments to policies, capacities and resources. The Committee observed that public institutions have a particularly important role to play in ending poverty in all its dimensions and ensuring that no one is left behind through the provision of public services and employment opportunities and the promotion of diversity and non-discrimination, among other actions.

The Committee noted that the principle of leaving no one behind, which is a core principle of the 2030 Agenda, sheds new light on the importance of overcoming some challenges that public administrations have long faced and the urgency of realizing the social equity principle in public administration. To do so, innovative ways have to be found to ensure that the concern to leave no one behind pervades public policies and public institutions at all levels. The contribution of the Committee to the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development identified possible elements to make that happen.

The Committee also noted that global policy coherence, or the lack thereof, could have a profound effect on development. For example, there might be priorities in the areas of trade, finance, production and consumption that compete or conflict with efforts to promote poverty eradication, protect the environment and reduce climate change.

At its sixteenth session, the Committee will consider strategies for integrated action to eradicate poverty as a multidimensional phenomenon and the implications for public institutions and the delivery of public services.

Documentation

Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on poverty eradication through regional development: the case of Brazil (E/C.16/2017/7)

Background note on the challenges for institutions in eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world: draft contribution to the 2017 thematic review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development

4. Provisional agenda for the seventeenth session of the Committee

The Committee will have before it a draft provisional agenda for its seventeenth session. In its resolution 68/1, the General Assembly called upon the Economic and Social Council to invite its subsidiary bodies to contribute, as appropriate, to its work in keeping with the Council's agreed annual theme. The theme of the 2018 session of the Council will be "From global to local: supporting sustainable and resilient societies in urban and rural communities". The Committee may wish to propose a provisional agenda for the seventeenth session incorporating an item on the governance and public administration aspects of the 2018 theme of the Council.

The Committee may also wish to allow for a contribution to the 2018 theme of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, to which the Council's theme is related. The forum's theme is "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies".

5. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its sixteenth session

The Committee will adopt a report to be submitted to the Economic and Social Council on the work of its sixteenth session. In accordance with resolution 68/1, the Committee will include in its report an executive summary, and the report should be concise, clearly identifying the conclusions and recommendations and issues that may require attention and/or action by the Council. The Council may conduct an action-oriented review of the report and recommendations of the Committee, focusing attention on issues that require a prioritized and coordinated substantive response from the United Nations system as a whole.

The Committee will also consider its contribution to the 2017 thematic review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development on the challenges for institutions in eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world, as well as to the in-depth review of the Sustainable Development Goals on eradicating poverty, ending hunger, ensuring healthy lives, achieving gender equality, building resilient infrastructure and promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and protecting oceans (Goals 1, 2, 3, 5, 9 and 14). In this connection, the Committee may examine and advise on institutional arrangements, plans and policies and means of implementation that can best build on the interlinkages among these Goals, as well as between them and the other Goals, and achieve integrated approaches.



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Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Sixteenth session

New York, 24-28 April 2017

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable
Development Goals through leadership, action and means**

Successfully achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: what is to be done?

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Committee of Experts on Public Administration the paper prepared by Committee member Allan Rosenbaum in collaboration with Vaiva Kalesnikaite of Florida International University. The content of the paper and the views expressed therein are those of the author and do not imply any expression of opinion on the part of the United Nations.

* E/C.16/2017/1.



Successfully achieving the Sustainable Development Goals: what is to be done?

Summary

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals will require significant capacity in terms of effective government institutions, possessed of adequate financial capacity and human resources. To gain a better understanding of both the institutional processes and structures that are likely to facilitate successful implementation, the author briefly examines four countries — Germany, Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa — that have had varied experiences in introducing sustainable development objectives into national development strategies. The evidence suggests that the success of national efforts to implement the Goals will depend substantially on government capacity and the effectiveness of a country's public sector.

The present paper calls for strengthening the governmental institutions whose effective performance is essential for the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Ten recommendations are made, which together emphasize the central role of Government, the need for an adequate and dependable revenue base, effective budgeting and planning processes, citizen empowerment, accountability and transparency, local capacity, strong management capacity and information systems, partnership between local and central governments, coalitions with civil society and the private sector and an acknowledgement of the complexity and fragility of reform processes.

Prior experience with the Millennium Development Goals has helped countries to learn what works in their national context and what can be done to improve policy formulation and implementation in the future. Institutional structures developed for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of progress in sustainable development generally, as well as public participation measures designed while implementing the Millennium Development Goals, should therefore aid in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. By putting prior experience to use, countries can significantly reduce the amount of new administrative resources needed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, provided implementation is underpinned by leadership, action and resources at both the national and local levels, as well as by efforts to make the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development better known to people all over the world.

I. Introduction

1. The promulgation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals represents one of the most significant efforts at seeking social, economic and environmental change in the history of the United Nations. If the Goals are successfully implemented by all, or even by a large number of the nations of the world, they will profoundly improve the well-being of humankind and especially of the most disadvantaged elements of the world's population. As such, they represent, in essence, a blueprint for and/or a road map to the building of a "good society". However, as the experience of the Millennium Development Goals has illustrated, it will be impossible to achieve such all-encompassing goals without effective government institutions possessed of adequate financial and human resources.

2. In many respects, the experience of the Millennium Development Goals, whose implementation was undertaken from 2000 to 2015, can provide guidance with regard to potential strategies as well as pathways to success in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. The experience also illustrates the obstacles that have to be overcome to achieve successful implementation of the complex economic, environmental and social objectives that make up the Sustainable Development Goals. For a number of reasons, it is not possible to equate exactly efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with prior efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals. The situation of the world is, in a number of ways, more complex than it was in 2000. Nevertheless, the successful achievement of some elements of the Millennium Development Goals, especially in the areas of improved health and the elimination of extreme poverty, provides a foundation of substantive progress upon which to build in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, knowledge generated through the processes of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals does provide guidance with regard to what is required for successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. However, while there have been a variety of reports assessing the achievement of specific Millennium Development Goals, there have been only a handful of studies that seek to systematically understand the factors that led to successful implementation of some Goals.

3. One of the most informative of these efforts is a November 2015 working paper entitled "National MDG implementation: lessons for the SDG era", by Moizza Binat Sarwar.¹ In the introduction to the paper, Sarwar notes that "[t]he Millennium Goals gave low and middle-income countries across the world a framework against which to measure progress ... but what Millennium Development Goal monitoring did not access is the extent to which the Goals themselves influenced national policymaking and government action". On the basis of intensive analyses of several countries, Sarwar suggested the following as lessons that could be drawn from the Millennium Development Goal experience:

- Countries are more likely to succeed in those intergovernmental goals for which they already have priorities in place. Millennium Development Goals ... have been used to reinforce existing policies

¹ Moizza Binat Sarwar, "National MDG implementation: lessons for the SDG era", Working Paper, No. 428 (London, Overseas Development Institute, 2015). Available from <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10003.pdf>.

- Monitoring agencies will need to be realistic about how long it will be before Sustainable Development Goal progress becomes visible ... [many] national Governments made serious arrangements to integrate the Millennium Development Goals only after a 10-year time lag
- Given how national priorities can [be] and are often different from the needs of local areas, an important point of discussion is whether the Millennium Development Goals would have had more political traction if engagement with the goals had been more localized
- Middle-income countries engaged with the Millennium Development Goals to further strategic regional interests ... Low-income country Governments' subscription to the language and process of the Goals appears to have been linked to accessing overseas donor assistance linked to the targets. For the Sustainable Development Goals, this implies that international donors need to engage in different ways accordingly, and that national civil society organizations will be important in furthering the Sustainable Development Goal agenda
- Monitoring the pace of and political drivers behind adoption and prioritization of Sustainable Development Goal targets on a regular basis would provide crucial data for reviewing and evaluating the Goals

4. To gain a better understanding of the institutional processes and structures that are likely to facilitate successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, the present paper will briefly examine the experiences of four countries — Germany, Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa — as they gear up to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The specific countries were chosen in part because they have had varying degrees of experience in seeking to introduce sustainable development policies into their national agendas and in implementing the Millennium Development Goals. No claim is made that they are adequately representative of worldwide experience in implementation of the Millennium Development Goals or in start-up of the Sustainable Development Goals. They are, however, illustrative of the experiences of many countries. Following the country reviews, 10 suggestions are presented that build upon insights drawn from the case studies of the four countries and from accepted good practices in the areas of effective policy development and implementation as well as from the discipline of public administration.

II. Preparing to implement the Sustainable Development Goals: building upon the Millennium Development Goal experience

5. Each country's efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals will require the actions of its principal governmental institutions. While those basic governmental institutions often appear to have remarkable similarities, as a consequence of historic, economic, and cultural differences, there are frequently significant differences in the ways they function. The differences are often not evident when examining the basic government institutional framework but they are very evident in any detailed examination of the ways in which the institutions

actually function. Consequently, it is very important that those seeking to implement the Goals understand the manner in which such institutions work. Although it was not possible to include extensive descriptions of the four countries in the present paper, that information will appear in a forthcoming paper complementary to this one, by the same authors. The case studies in that paper will include brief descriptions of the nature and structure of governmental institutions and more detailed descriptions of the institutional architecture established for the purposes of implementing the Goals.²

Germany

6. The formal commitment of Germany to sustainable development policies can be traced to the adoption in 2002 of its National Sustainable Development Strategy. The Strategy is referred to as a “living document”,³ since it has been continuously updated every four years, accompanied by progress reports with measurable indicators to evaluate progress. With implementation of the Strategy, Germany has put in place a significant institutional framework for planning and implementing sustainable initiatives.

7. Since the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals by the United Nations in 2015, Germany has been working to identify the gaps in its National Sustainable Development Strategy. While the 2002 Strategy is a comprehensive document that has already achieved sustainable development success, significant gaps do exist in terms of its relevance to the Goals. For example, it has been largely focused on national initiatives and has lacked the global focus promoted by the Goals. To fully integrate the Goals, a decision was reached to revise the Strategy and adopt a new version of the document by late 2016.

8. In the preparation of the revised national sustainable development strategy, all levels of government have been involved. While the Federal Chancellery is the lead agency, intergovernmental cooperation has been sought. The State Secretaries’ Committee for Sustainable Development is responsible for the implementation and update of the strategy, while each government department is charged with contributing to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. In the preparation of the strategy, every ministry analysed the Goals and the ways in which their achievement could be integrated into the revised strategy. To ensure consistent implementation of the strategy, the Federal Chancellery consults with each of the federal ministries regarding the progress being made.

9. The 249-page draft of the new strategy was made publicly available in May 2016.⁴ State and non-State stakeholders were able to submit comments regarding the

² The co-authors have drawn upon the dissertation by Rachel Emas for various aspects of the case study material for Germany and South Africa. See Rachel Emas, “Success and shortcomings in the implementation of national sustainable development strategies: from the greening of governance to the governance of greening”, PhD dissertation, Florida International University, 2015.

³ Imme Scholz, Niels Keijzer and Carmen Richerzhagen, “Promoting the Sustainable Development Goals in Germany”, Discussion Paper (Bonn, German Development Institute, 2016). Available from https://www.die-gdi.de/uploads/media/DP_13.2016.pdf.

⁴ See Germany, Bundestregierung, *Deutsche Nachhaltigkeitsstrategie: Neuauflage 2016* (Berlin, 2016). Available from https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/StatistischeSeiten/Breg/Nachhaltigkeit/0-Buchne/2016-05-31-download-nachhaltigkeitsstrategie-entwurf.pdf?__blob=publicationFile.

strategy until 31 July 2016. The final draft of the strategy, which was to be adopted in late 2016, reviews the background of sustainable development in Germany, its challenges and the ever-evolving institutional framework put in place beginning with the 2002 Strategy. The document focuses on each Sustainable Development Goal individually and proposes actions that the Government will undertake to implement them. There is a strong international focus, with Germany reaffirming its commitment to assistance to other countries implementing the Goals. The draft also introduces specific indicators to track progress in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Altogether, the number of measurable indicators has increased from 38 (under the previous Strategy) to 61 under the revised draft. Every two years, the Federal Statistical Office will be analysing and publishing reports regarding Germany's improvement with regard to the 61 indicators. The revised strategy will continue to be a living document, to be further developed and updated every four years. While the revised strategy had not yet been adopted as of November 2016, Germany had made significant progress in the policy formulation stage.

Indonesia

10. Shortly after adoption of the Millennium Declaration in 2000, the Millennium Development Goals began to be included in major national planning documents of Indonesia, such as the National Long-Term Plan 2005-2025, and in various budget documents.¹ A national Millennium Development Goal coordinating team was established under the Ministry of National Development Planning. Local governments were required to prepare subnational action plans outlining how the Goals were to be implemented locally. Out of 67 indicators, 49 were achieved in Indonesia, while 18 remained unfinished by 2015.

11. Indonesia has been actively developing a post-2015 agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals.² The main document addressing national development is the National Long-Term Development Plan 2005-2025, mandated by Law No. 25/2004. The Ministry of National Development Planning is in charge of drafting national development plans and, since 2014, has reported to the Office of the President. Since national development plans are binding in Indonesia, local governments are expected to develop and implement complementary development plans.

12. Implementation of the National Long-Term Development Plan is expected to span four major stages, each lasting five years and corresponding to the election cycles. In 2014, the Government released the Medium-Term Development Plan 2015-2019, the third stage of implementation of the long-term plan. The medium-term plan was prepared in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals and focuses on broad objectives that are related to many of the Goals. The Ministry of National Development Planning is to play a key role in implementing the plan and is responsible for its development, monitoring and evaluation of implementation, further development of later stages of the long-term plan, data management and coordination of the implementation of the long-term plan.³

¹ Indonesia, *National Medium-Term Development Plan 2015-2019* (2014).

² Kementerian Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional/Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Nasional (Bappenas), "History of Bappenas", available from <http://www.bappenas.go.id/cn/profil-bappenas/sejarah/>.

13. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will begin in 2017 and will be completed by 2030. However, one important issue that Indonesia may face in implementing the Goals, as in other countries, is public sector corruption. Salaries of civil servants in Indonesia are generally quite low, and corruption persists in government procurement and in other activities.⁷ Another issue is the absence of a clear-cut distribution of policy and administrative authority, both horizontally and vertically. Authority overlaps between national ministries lead to ambiguity in policy implementation and coordination. Vertically, overlaps of authority exist between the central and local governments. Conflicting laws and regulations lead to the intervention of provincial governments in matters that should be the responsibility of district and city governments.⁷

14. Given current circumstances, including partially completed decentralization efforts, the formulation of development plans at the different levels of government may not guarantee successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.⁸ The central and subnational governments may need to establish clearer patterns of authority and cooperation as well as to resolve existing overlaps and gaps in policy design and implementation. In addition, there is an urgent need to strengthen local government financial capacity and address regional socioeconomic disparities to facilitate effective implementation of the Goals between now and 2030.

Mexico

15. Beginning in 2000, Mexico initiated efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals. A progress report published in 2013 provides a detailed account of Mexico's success and challenges in the implementation of the Goals. At that time, out of 51 measurable indicators, 38 had been met, while 5 were progressing towards being met by 2015. To implement the Goals, Mexico put in place an institutional structure for oversight and monitoring, with the Office of the President playing a central role in coordinating implementation. In Mexico, most public programmes related to the Goals have been in place since 2001. A major step in Mexico's implementation of the Goals was the establishment of the Millennium Development Goal Specialized Technical Committee, headed by the Office of the Chief of Staff to the President. It included participants from a number of Mexican government agencies charged with implementing policies connected to the Goals.

16. Mexico does not have a specific strategy for sustainable development, but the National Development Plan 2013-2018 includes a sustainable development element. The Government published the Plan in 2013. It includes five long-term goals: (a) Mexico in peace; (b) inclusive Mexico; (c) quality education; (d) prosperous Mexico; and (e) Mexico with global responsibility. For each of the five broad goals outlined above, objectives, strategies and action areas are found in the Plan. Measurable indicators to track the progress of implementation are presented.

⁷ Agus Pramono, "Weak central authority and fragmented bureaucracy: a study of policy implementation in Indonesia", in Jon S. T. Quah, ed., *The Role of the Public Bureaucracy in Policy Implementation in Five ASEAN Countries* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁸ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), *Green Growth in Bandung, Indonesia*, OECD Green Growth Studies (Paris, OECD Publishing, 2016).

17. Mexico is currently in the process of aligning national programmes with the Sustainable Development Goals. It has established a new committee, the Specialized Technical Committee for the Sustainable Development Goals, comprising the same agencies that led the Millennium Development Goal Specialized Technical Committee (which monitored those Goals). In addition, the new technical committee includes eight agencies that were not part of the Millennium Development Goal committee, thus bringing the number of participating institutions to 23.

18. The first stage of the work of the Specialized Technical Committee for the Sustainable Development Goals involved identifying measurable indicators and assigning them to respective agencies, according to the policy area. Later, indicators will be defined and adjusted to the national situation, at which stage various non-governmental stakeholders, such as civil society, academia and the private sector, will be involved.⁹

19. The implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will be headed by the Office of the Presidency and will build on the existing administrative structures, which are used for implementing the National Development Plan. It is felt that the success of the Goals' implementation in Mexico depends on the buy-in of the chief executive and leadership at the highest level of Government. The Congress will, in turn, work to allocate a sufficient budget to fund the initiatives required to implement the Goals. The National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI), as in the case of the Millennium Development Goals, will be responsible for monitoring and maintaining statistical information on the Sustainable Development Goals and making it publicly available online.

20. While Mexico has taken steps towards adopting the 2030 Agenda, the country faces some significant challenges that could hinder its implementation. One issue is the need to continue enhancing public participation mechanisms. For example, options for citizen participation are limited in most budgetary decision-making processes.¹⁰ At the local level, some municipalities lack any public participation mechanisms.¹¹ Ensuring public participation is key for successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Hearing citizens and citizen groups can build on public awareness initiatives, increase the chances of getting broad public buy-in for the Sustainable Development Goals and create opportunities to gather important feedback in order to design better public policies for their implementation. Another issue of concern, noted by the World Bank, is the prevalence of corruption.¹²

⁹ Mexico, *Implementing the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals in Mexico* (Mexico City, 2016). Available from <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/10762Brochure%20on%20SDGs%20implementation%20in%20Mexico.pdf>.

¹⁰ International Budget Partnership, Budget work by country database, available from <http://www.internationalbudget.org/budget-work-by-country/findgroup/group-data/?country=mx>.

¹¹ Ilyana Albarran, "Decentralization and citizen participation in Mexico", PhD dissertation, Florida International University, 2015.

¹² World Bank, World DataBank: Worldwide Governance Indicators database, available from <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/reports.aspx?source=worldwide-governance-indicators>.

South Africa

21. The roots of South Africa's commitment to sustainability can be traced back to the 1990s and the adoption of the country's new Constitution, which guaranteed environmental protection for both present and future generations. The country's major sustainable development document, entitled "A national framework for sustainable development in South Africa", was adopted in 2008, driven in part by the Millennium Development Goals. While the framework did not mention specific actions to be undertaken by the Government, it served as a basis for developing a national strategy and action plan.¹³

22. The most comprehensive document for sustainable development, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development and Action Plan, was enacted in 2011. The main body responsible for the implementation of the Strategy was the Department of Environmental Affairs, but the Strategy also mentions national and provincial departments, municipalities, public entities and civil society as implementing bodies. However, South Africa faced significant challenges in its implementation. The sustainable development targets outlined in the strategy were not specific enough, thus creating difficulty in measuring progress. There was also a lack of data on the indicators outlined in the Strategy. A draft progress report, published in 2014 by the Department of Environmental Affairs to evaluate the Strategy's implementation, revealed that out of 138 indicators, 19 were scored "appropriate", 36 "caution" and 83 "reconsider".¹⁴

23. The National Planning Commission was established in 2010 to develop a long-term strategic plan for South Africa. It is responsible for advising the Government and stakeholders on the implementation of the National Development Plan and for measuring its progress. In 2012, the Commission drafted the most recent major sustainable development document for South Africa, the National Development Plan 2030. The 489-page document outlines two main goals for 2030, eliminating poverty and reducing inequality.¹⁵ The Plan does not mention the Sustainable Development Goals directly, but major overlaps exist between the goals of the National Development Plan 2030 and the Goals. Responsibility for monitoring implementation and outcomes rests with the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.¹⁶

24. While it is too early to attempt to assess the achievements of South Africa in terms of addressing the Sustainable Development Goals, there are at least two reasons to be optimistic. First, as a consequence of having been one of the countries

¹³ South Africa, Department of Environmental Affairs, *A National Framework for Sustainable Development in South Africa* (2008). Available from https://www.environment.gov.za/sites/default/files/docs/2008nationalframeworkfor_sustainabledevelopment.pdf.

¹⁴ Ibid., *National Strategy for Sustainable Development 1: Monitoring and Evaluation 2nd Draft Report*. Available from http://soer.deat.gov.za/dm_documents/NSSD1_Draft_Report_20_May2014_final_draft_for_comment_vQ62Q.pdf.

¹⁵ South Africa, National Planning Commission, *Our future — make it work: national development plan 2030* (2012). Available from <http://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/Executive%20Summary-NDP%202030%20-%20Our%20future%20-%20make%20it%20work.pdf>.

¹⁶ "The National Development Plan unpacked", *South African Government News Agency*, 19 February 2014. Available from www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/national-development-plan-unpacked.

that were most energetic in seeking to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, South Africa has established a substantial set of governmental structures for implementing sustainable development initiatives. Second, the country did have some significant success in achieving several of the targets of the Millennium Development Goals. To some extent, its efforts are reflected in the country's positive movement with regard to various components of the human development index. However, one concern is that in recent years there may have been a significant decline in stakeholder engagement, which could prove problematic for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

III. Ten recommendations for effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

25. Each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals is of great importance for the future well-being of all societies. Hence, there really may not be a specific priority in terms of the urgency of their implementation, and no effort is being made in the present paper to prioritize them. Nevertheless, Goal 16, the latter part of which speaks to broad issues involved in, among other things, building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, in all probability is the single most important of all 17 Goals. If the four case studies suggest nothing else, not to mention prior studies and analyses of the problems inherent in implementing the Millennium Development Goals, it is that national efforts at implementing the Sustainable Development Goals are likely to rise or fall on government capacity and the effectiveness of a country's public sector. This is because the capacity of nation States to bring about the very significant economic, environmental and social achievements inherent in the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals is highly dependent upon the capacity of their government institutions to mobilize the substantial resources required — financial, institutional and human.

26. As noted above, efforts to implement the Sustainable Development Goals will have one important advantage, and that is the knowledge and experience gained by countries through their prior efforts in attempting to implement the Millennium Development Goals. As studies of Millennium Development Goal implementation have shown and also as noted in the present paper in the various country case studies, the reality is that in many cases, it often took two thirds of the 15-year implementation period to align a country's national development goals with the Millennium Development Goals. In terms of implementing efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, another significant advantage is that, in many cases, the authorities responsible for shaping a country's efforts at implementing them will be able to rely very heavily upon the institutional architecture created to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Nevertheless, there are several important points suggested by the case studies and other analyses that those seeking to effectively implement the Sustainable Development Goals need to keep in mind.

Remember the central role of government

27. Across many parts of the world, the last four decades have not been the best of times for the public sector. Throughout this period, government and its institutions

have been under attack from critics of all kinds and types. In some countries, government programmes and policies have frequently been attacked as bureaucratic, ineffective and, in some cases, even harmful and counterproductive. Consequently, the level of distrust in the various institutions of government has grown dramatically. In some countries, resources that might logically have been invested in building government capacity have, for many years, been diverted to the private sector and/or non-governmental organizations. In other countries, anti-government attitudes may inhibit capacity to mobilize needed resources.

28. One response to anti-government attitudes — one often encouraged by numerous international organizations, including the World Bank and the United Nations — has been to encourage movement towards “collaborative governance”. The inherent underlying presumption is that government acting alone cannot adequately respond to society’s problems. Rather, to be effective, government is dependent upon establishing cooperative relationships with the private and non-governmental sectors. While collaborative governance, where government engages mostly in joint initiatives with the private or the non-profit sectors, or both, can have benefits, there are also costs and complications.

29. Ultimately, the private sector is defined by the need to seek profit, which often requires the pursuit of self-interest and may undermine the public interest. Non-governmental organizations will generally lack the capacity to bring about the large-scale societal and economic change required for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and, in some cases, may be self-interested and/or rather fragile institutions. Moreover, in the end, only government has the ultimate responsibility to produce a good society. Government remains the most important enabling institution of any society. If government is effective, one can have a productive, accountable society, a good society with a complementarily successful private sector. If government is not effective, such a good society is unlikely to be realized, since it is government that must establish the foundations and context within which all of the other institutions of society function.

Recognize the centrality of an adequate and dependable revenue base

30. For many countries, implementing the Sustainable Development Goals will be an expensive task. In many instances, especially in transitional and developing countries, governments generally, especially regional and local, possess limited revenue-raising capacity, thus limiting their ability to effectively implement the Goals. These resource limitations inevitably constrain governments in providing the services that their citizens require and in playing a needed role in the process of institution-building.

31. The authority and capacity to raise revenue at all levels of government, whether through taxes and fees, or assumption of debt, is essential to the building of strong governments. That is the case not only because adequate revenue is a prerequisite to the provision of effective public services, but also because the responsibility of having to raise revenue ultimately motivates public officials to remain attentive to the concerns of constituents, who may vote them in or out of office, and behave responsively. Public officials who do not have the authority of imposing taxes can more readily pass important governing responsibilities on to others.

Effective budgeting and planning processes are at the heart of government capacity

32. There is no more important annual document produced by any government than its budget. The budget reflects both the specific priorities and the general goals of the government for the period of time for which it has been established. That is why it is critical that budgetary processes be open and transparent and that the staff of the budget agency be both competent professionals and committed to operating in a transparent manner. It is also very important, as illustrated in the case studies, that the country's main budgetary agency, whether it be the ministry of finance or a comparable agency, work closely with the agency that has been given responsibility for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

33. Almost as important as an effective budgetary process is an effective planning process. In particular, planning activities, if they are to be effective, must involve a wide spectrum of the citizenry and be relevant for all stakeholders. As the case studies suggest, one of the major criticisms and problems in the process of Millennium Development Goal implementation was the lack of inclusive citizen and/or community involvement, especially at the local level. Community-based planning that reflects the needs of the entire community — its women, its children, its elderly, its poor, its minorities, its youth — is perhaps the single most effective means to develop priorities that truly reflect the needs of a nation's community. Consequently, the implementation of participatory strategic planning techniques and the linking of the outcomes of such processes to the development of budget priorities is very important for the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Citizen empowerment is a prerequisite to effective Government

34. One of the features of democratic governance is the involvement of the people who are being governed in the shaping of governmental decisions and policies. However, all too often, only some of the people are effectively involved in, or able to influence their governments, even at the local level. The poor and the marginalized may have little or no influence on the decisions of national or local governments. Such a situation serves to undermine the effectiveness of government — both as a democratic institution and as a generator of needed economic and social development. It also will ensure that the Sustainable Development Goal priority to “leave no one behind” will very likely not be met.

35. Consequently, it is critical that efforts to build and strengthen government include major initiatives to encourage the empowerment of all citizens, especially the poor and the marginalized. Programmes that reach out to the poor, whether they live in cities or the countryside, and that provide them with adequate information to understand both the opportunities for, and the responsibilities inherent in, self-government are critical for the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. As experience in many highly developed countries has shown, such initiatives can have significant benefits in promoting social well-being and economic growth.

Accountability and transparency are essential for citizen confidence

36. Throughout the world, citizens are increasingly demanding that government be both accountable and transparent. This is true at all levels of government because citizen confidence in government is very directly related both to its responsiveness and to its openness to their participation and involvement. For citizens to participate effectively in government, they must be able to understand how it functions and what it does. Local governments have a special opportunity to set new standards of excellence in terms of accountability and transparency and, in so doing, to help reverse the growing trend of citizen disillusionment with government institutions.

The critical importance of local capacity

37. In many parts of the world, highly centralized Governments tend to concentrate both political and economic power in their capital cities. Frequently, this serves to work against the interests of the other cities and communities within a country. When power is highly centralized in national Governments and their capital cities, other communities often have great difficulty in creating the needed enabling environment to facilitate community and economic development. Typically, in such situations, outside of the capital city, there is a lack of the revenue needed to create the infrastructure necessary to facilitate private sector investment and consequent economic development. Decentralized governance, with effective local governments, can much more readily mobilize the resources and authority needed to provide significantly greater opportunities for meaningful and responsive local economic development.

38. One can get a good sense of the connection between economic development and the strength of subnational governance in a country simply by comparing data regarding the proportion of governmental expenditures spent at the subnational level with levels of national economic development. In the highly economically developed Western European and North American countries and Japan, in excess of 40 per cent (as high as 50 or 60 per cent) of all governmental spending takes place at the subnational level, while in the economically less developed parts of the world, the figure ranges from 3 to 30 per cent. Data from the World Bank Institute further illustrate the importance of a strong subnational government resource base. In North America and Europe, 57 per cent of all public sector employment is at the subnational level, while in Africa the figure is 6 per cent; in Latin America, 21 per cent; and in Asia, 37 per cent. Thus, in both governmental spending and personnel, there is a strong correlation between the proportion of both public employees and expenditures found at the subnational level and the degree of national economic development.

39. The relationship described above is understandable. Local government capacity, including revenue-raising capacity and authority to enact relevant local legislation, is critical for successful local economic development. Putting in place the appropriate legal framework and the necessary physical infrastructure is a precondition of economic productivity. Absent such capacity, local entrepreneurs are often unable to initiate greatly needed new economic activity which is likely to be critical for the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Strong management capacity and information systems are important

40. There is no one best way to structure a governmental system. Countries often reflect significant variations in the formal structures of national and subnational governments and with regard to the services carried out at the national, regional, local or community levels. Many highly economically developed countries tend to devolve education and health services to the regional or local level, but even in these areas there is much variation. The structuring of national and subnational governments and the issue of which services will be carried out at what level are usually a product of some combination of past history, citizen demand, local traditions, administrative capacity, organizational and institutional self-interest, perceived efficiency and political negotiation. Moreover, these decisions are almost never set in stone. Adjustments are frequently made between the central and the local governments regarding roles and responsibilities.

41. While there is no one best structural arrangement for national Governments, the management capacity of almost all governments could be significantly enhanced. This is the case in both developed and developing countries. In some instances, at both the national and subnational government levels, there is a lack of adequately trained staff. Governments may also be slow in generating the kind of information citizens need to respond effectively to complex contemporary public issues. Critically needed performance measurement and quality management systems may be less than adequately implemented, and in many countries, at both the national and subnational levels, basic management processes, including personnel systems, budgeting and accounting practices, may be lacking. The effective implementation of such systems is critical to maintaining public confidence and trust in government and to the effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Strengthen the partnership between local and central governments

42. The growth and emergence of local government around the world has certainly been one of the notable achievements of the institution-building and governance-strengthening efforts of the past several decades. Grass-roots activists, local leaders, national leaders and international organizations have all contributed to the strengthening of local governance. However, it does appear that the past decade has witnessed a decline in the commitment of many national Governments in this area. This is occurring in most parts of the world and is a serious concern, given especially the demonstrated importance of local governments for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. National Governments, through their legislation and through their fiscal policies, significantly shape the environment within which local governments operate and can limit or support their capacity to act effectively.

43. Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals requires national government policymakers and institutions to provide strong support for local governments. Their support may take the form of enacting enabling and other types of legislation that provide subnational governments with the capacity to act autonomously and provide services needed for the effective implementation of the Goals. Frequently, the financial resources needed to provide assigned service responsibilities are lacking. Often, where there have been decentralization efforts,

national Governments continue to regulate local activities closely as well as limit their capacity to raise the revenue necessary to fund local services.

44. As the experience with the Millennium Development Goals has shown, even the most supportive national Government, if acting alone, cannot adequately ensure full implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. There has to be significant local demand and concern for the development and maintenance of effective decentralized governmental systems. However, central Governments may not be keen to give up either the resources or the authority to control them. In practice, the need to encourage decentralization, build local government capacity and facilitate citizen participation may gain a foothold only when there is pressure from the local community to carry out such reforms.

45. It is of critical importance that officials at all levels of government, as well as civil society representatives, be committed to working together to create the appropriate institutional mechanisms for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals. It is especially necessary that those at both the local and national levels recognize that the strengthening of levels of government is not a zero-sum game, in the sense that, if one level of government is enhanced, another will inevitably become weaker. Much contemporary experience, particularly in those countries where governmental institutions are the most highly developed, suggests the opposite. When one level of government becomes institutionally stronger and more competent, pressure builds for other levels of government to follow suit.

Build coalitions with civil society and the private sector

46. The private sector has been an important part of shaping the progress and the well-being of all countries, especially the industrialized countries. An important development during the past decade for those concerned about the future of democracy has been the emergence of civil society organizations and grass-roots activism. Through its own independent activities and, increasingly, through its ability to influence other institutions, the private sector and its representatives have long shaped the policies and actions of national and local governments in important ways. In more recent years, civil society organizations have begun to do so as well.

47. It is also important to keep in mind that governments, at both the national and local levels, can create environments that are friendly to and supportive of private sector and civil society growth or that hinder their progress. Through the protection of such rights as freedom of speech, association and press, as well as through a variety of specific legislative actions, including taxation, financial support and regulatory activity, government can profoundly impact the ability of civil society and private sector institutions to develop and flourish, thereby impacting in significant ways their ability to support the most effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

48. It is crucial that both national and subnational governments work in partnership with the private sector and civil society organizations to explore the most effective means for delivering services to the citizens of any given community. In some cases, it may well be that civil society organizations represent a more effective means for the delivery of some services necessary for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Sometimes private sector capacity can be very

important. However, it is equally imperative that governments recognize that in the end they bear the main responsibility for implementing the Goals and the building of the good society that their implementation will produce. Consequently, governments must not abdicate their responsibility for the delivery of needed services to their citizenry on the assumption that either the private sector or civil society organizations can provide them. The role of government is especially important when the most effective delivery of services requires the involvement of all levels of government.

Recognize the complexity and fragility of reform processes

49. The process of policy reform and programme implementation is a complex and difficult one. One must negotiate among many well-established interests with strong needs and/or desires to maintain existing policy and practice. Such groups will sometimes resist efforts to bring about change, especially systematic reform. In transitional and developing countries, the problem of institutionalizing reform can be even more complex if the institutions of government are too weak. In other instances, when reforms are implemented, the pressure to revert back to past procedures and practices is often very strong.

50. The process of institutional change and/or reform can be further complicated by the fact that many of the external organizations that support and encourage such efforts in a country may approach these matters with a short-term perspective. The key advocates and supporters of reform may leave the scene much too soon, giving those who wish to lessen or obviate the impact of reform the opportunity to do so with little or no resistance. In other cases, economic or political circumstances may go beyond the control of participants in any reform process and complicate and undermine reform initiatives. Consequently, at the national and subnational levels, it is crucial that those involved in the process of building and/or reforming the institutions of government with a view to effective implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and the achievement of social progress recognize that such efforts often require much patience and a long-term commitment. Just as there will be successes, there may also be disappointments. Nevertheless, the lessons of history make it clear that with sustained effort and commitment, significant progress, where and when needed, can be achieved.

III. Conclusions

51. In the present paper, the progress of four countries in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals has been briefly reviewed. Following that review, 10 recommendations were presented for strengthening the governmental institutions whose effective performance is essential for the successful implementation of the Goals. In the cases studied, most activity regarding implementation of the Goals has so far been focused upon initial steps for policy formulation. All four countries had sustainable development and/or national development strategies prior to adoption of the Goals. Germany has taken steps to revise its national sustainable development strategy and address each Goal specifically. In Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa, the goals and objectives of the national development strategies are mostly comparable to, and in synergy with, the Sustainable Development Goals. To

eliminate any possible mismatch between national development plans and the Goals, countries may wish to review and revise national development strategies in the light of the Goals. Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be facilitated by formulating policies that correspond to individual Goals, while taking into account varying national situations.

52. In each of the cases presented, there is a high degree of continuity in terms of sustainable development policies. Germany, over the last 20 years, has built an institutional infrastructure for designing and implementing sustainable development strategies. It has utilized that structure for drafting the revised national sustainable development strategy, while aligning it with the Sustainable Development Goals. Such structures will also be used to implement the revised strategy. The three other countries (Indonesia, Mexico, and South Africa), to varying degrees, developed structures and procedures to implement the Millennium Development Goals that will be useful for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, prior experience with the Millennium Development Goals has helped countries to learn what works in their national context, and what can be done to improve policy formulation and implementation in the future. Additionally, institutional structures developed for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of progress in sustainable development more generally, as well as public participation measures designed while implementing the Millennium Development Goals, will aid in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals. By putting prior experience to use, countries can significantly reduce the amount of new administrative resources needed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals.

53. Participation of various non-State stakeholders, developed previously, will further help in designing better-informed solutions and obtaining critically needed community buy-in for the Sustainable Development Goals. Germany made the draft of its revised strategy available to citizens for public comment. South Africa, especially in its early efforts at defining a national sustainable development policy, utilized a number of platforms for obtaining public engagement in the process. More recently, during the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development, Mexico indicated a commitment to establishing mechanisms of public participation that would inform the implementation of the National Development Plan. While some public participation mechanisms already exist in all four countries, the mechanisms can in each instance be enhanced. This is a concern for almost all countries in implementing the Goals and is especially the case in those countries where citizen voices may often not be heard owing to public corruption or repressive elites, especially at the local levels.

54. The existing national strategies for sustainable development should be devised as living documents. Since the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals will last over the course of 15 years, it is imperative that governments continuously evaluate their success at achieving them through monitoring and evaluation utilizing measurable indicators. Tracking progress fosters a learning process, which enables governments to update their policy strategies to match policy actions as the strategies are evolving in accordance with national situations.

55. One major challenge that all countries face in the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals is the localization of the Goals and targets. In the case of the Millennium Development Goals, local governments often had little or no

knowledge of the goals and thus were not in a position to reflect on how to align their priorities with national priorities in the corresponding areas. As a consequence, they were unable to effectively mobilize needed resources or to bring about the alignment of national government policies in such a manner as to maximize possibilities for successful implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Furthermore, the varying capabilities of subnational governments and the variation in the allocation of governmental responsibilities and services between national and subnational governments represent a particularly difficult problem to be addressed. In Germany, governmental responsibilities are clearly divided between different levels of government. That may not always be the case in Indonesia, Mexico and South Africa, or in many other countries.

56. In each of the countries studied for this paper, there is considerable ambiguity about the sharing of responsibilities between national, regional and local governments. For instance, in South Africa, it sometimes may not be clear which services are in the jurisdiction of a provincial or a municipal government. As a result, implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals could be hindered, since, as the recent experience with the Millennium Development Goals has shown, local ownership of the Goals is a necessary condition for success. Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals may also be impeded by varying degrees of local government capacity. For example, there are substantial regional and local disparities in economic development in many countries, especially between urban and rural areas. National Governments must dedicate resources to building government capacity at both the national and local levels to aid in the implementation of the Goals. Most importantly, governments at all levels must continue to work directly with the not-for-profit, non-governmental sectors and the private sector if implementation of the Goals is to be achieved.

57. Finally, as noted at the outset of this paper, and as clearly illustrated by the experience of the Millennium Development Goals, achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals will require the mobilization of very significant amounts of resources, both financial and human, as well as the reliance upon existing and, in some instances, newly created governmental institutions. Any effort to mobilize the kind of resources needed to implement the Sustainable Development Goals will require strong leadership and great commitment. The leadership of a country must involve the leading figures of its governments, national and subnational, but cannot stop there. It must engage a very broad spectrum of the entirety of the country, including its private and non-governmental sectors and the great bulk of its citizenry as well. One of the most important lessons of the Millennium Development Goal experience is that, while important progress was made in achieving them, and in so doing, in moving forward in the building of good societies, greater national commitment and engagement ultimately was needed. Such commitment requires major initiatives to make the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives that they represent far more well known to people all over the world. It is important that such efforts be initiated immediately and become a much more central part of the efforts to make the 2030 Agenda, and the benefits that its implementation will bring about, a reality for the entirety of the world's people.



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Ensuring effective implementation of the Sustainable

Development Goals: leadership, action and means

Understanding the needs of local authorities and communities and supporting and equipping them for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Note by the Secretariat

The Secretariat has the honour to transmit to the Committee of Experts on Public Administration the paper prepared by Committee member Najat Zarrouk in collaboration with Jean-Pierre Elong Mbassi of United Cities and Local Governments of Africa. The content of the paper and views expressed therein are those of the authors and do not imply any expression of opinion on the part of the United Nations.

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Understanding the needs of local authorities and communities and supporting and equipping them for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

Summary

Local authorities everywhere are no longer merely service providers, but also complex systems that can play a central role in an interdependent world. Their role in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (General Assembly resolution 70/1) is critical. The 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), are all closely related to the day-to-day responsibilities of subnational governments, for example in combating poverty and hunger, providing access to basic services, fighting inequalities, building peaceful and inclusive societies, protecting human rights and promoting gender equality. The complexity of local authorities is compounded by the fact that the Sustainable Development Goals, while universal, are not mandatory. Each country, and within each country each local or regional government, must examine its needs and priorities in relation to the Goals and in consideration of national sustainable development targets.

In the present paper, the authors recall that local development continues to encounter a multitude of obstacles, multidimensional challenges and constraints, some of which are structural and some cyclical, while others are new and emerging challenges that will have to be reckoned with. These include questions of intergovernmental relations arising from differences in historical context, the recognition and understanding of the value of decentralization processes, administrative structures and arrangements for the distribution of powers, representation and participation and resource-sharing. The availability of the necessary skills and attention to capacity development at the local level is essential given that it is at that level that the impact of any decentralization process is determined. To that, one could add the need to anchor democracy and good public governance at the local level and to attend to the important challenges of urbanization.

The authors conclude with a call for a series of measures that could be considered in the implementation of global commitments at the local level. In the view of the expert, these include moving gradually towards a smaller and more strategic national State, supporting the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, providing local authorities with adequate access to resources and strengthening their administrative capacity, and promoting the coherence of initiatives in support of the implementation of the Goals at the local level.

I. Decentralization and local governance: political and administrative decisions key to the successful implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals

[Original: French]

1. Because all development is local, decentralization, as an expression and method of local governance, is of great importance, especially in the current global context. The term encompasses the multitude of historical, sociological, ethnic, cultural, political, institutional, legal, territorial, semantic, administrative and managerial realities that shape and define both the environments and the political and institutional decisions of States. However, their democratic configurations, their mechanisms for taking public action and their public policies and decentralization in local governance are key political and administrative factors for development in many countries.

2. Indeed, local authorities everywhere are no longer merely service providers. They are also highly complex systems that can play a central role in an interdependent world. Most of the problems in the world today can therefore be found in small communities or in parts of a country. Global economic, political and cultural processes are now local and have growing local impacts. The local level is not only about meeting needs but also about the relationship between the people and the land, and between democracy and development.

3. We should nevertheless first acknowledge that not all Member States are in favour of decentralized governments or local and regional governments. Since local governance is not the same as decentralization, some States have decentralized governments with strong local and regional governments, whereas others are highly centralized and have no local or regional governments. In either scenario, local governance arrangements require local interests, problems, needs, means and resources to be addressed, discussed and negotiated. If the goal is to achieve sustainable local development, any decentralization process that seeks to enhance and strengthen local governance would require the creation of a favourable, enabling and facilitating environment to allow local and regional governments to have the legitimacy they need, to act in an atmosphere of trust, to have genuine local autonomy and to be genuine actors in the management of local public affairs, in a spirit of strong collaboration with central State institutions as well as other actors and stakeholders. Local and regional governments will then be able to respond to the needs and aspirations of citizens and communities while coping with their difficulties and challenges.

4. The Sustainable Development Goals, while universal, are not mandatory and they do take into account specific countries. Every country, and certainly every local and regional government within each country, must consider its needs and priorities in respect of each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the 169 targets, tailor the targets to its own situation, and adopt a national development programme that includes the selected Goals. For example, what role can a local government play in a landlocked country where the priority is to strive to incorporate the issue of oceans into its development programme? What role can local and regional governments play in countries in post-conflict situations, where the entire apparatus

of the State is to be rebuilt? How should power and resources be shared in countries in democratic transition?

5. In parallel, the achievement of most of the Sustainable Development Goals and the related targets remains dependent on the existence of local and regional governments that can effectively and equitably deliver essential public and community services, such as education, health care, water, sanitation and public order, or create a favourable and attractive environment for local economic development, especially for microenterprises and small and medium-sized enterprises, and encourage their formalization (Goal 8). There are several countries where local and regional governments play a key role in that area, in particular in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa, thereby amplifying their role in the achievement of the Goals.

6. Consequently, it is important for the international community, Member States and other actors and stakeholders to understand the needs of local and regional governments in order to support, empower, equip and transform them so that they can contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals in each State Member of the United Nations. The present paper endeavours to provide some answers to these issues.

II. A constrictive environment and multidimensional challenges

7. The world today, as described in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is characterized by huge sustainable development challenges. At the local level, local governance and decentralization, as integral parts of any process of local development, continue to encounter a multitude of obstacles and as many multidimensional challenges and constraints that must be addressed in order to avoid the shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals and promote effective and efficient achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals within the allotted time frame. Some are structural and some cyclical, while others are new and emerging challenges that will have to be reckoned with.

Challenges in relations between States and local and regional governments

8. Despite ongoing legislative efforts and electoral processes in most Member States, relations between States and local and regional governments encounter many challenges, including historical context and capitalization; the vision, recognition, understanding, perception and upgrading of these processes; the territorial architecture and its consistency and stability, a good balance between the various levels of government and the people; constitutional guarantees, the articulation of principles and their translation into reality; the legal framework; processes for appointing and electing local and regional officials; the distribution and targeted strengthening of jurisdiction since that is holds the key to the outcome, effectiveness and impact of any decentralization process; the sharing and allocation of resources of all kinds, including with regard to official development assistance and international cooperation; relationships with State representatives at the subnational level; the existence of structured inter-institutional dialogue between actors and

levels of government; performance oversight, follow-up, evaluation and measurement modalities; and support for anchoring good governance at the local or regional level.

9. The building and consolidation of a State and making it resilient require the building of a State in a diverse but unified nation. Decentralization therefore means profoundly and completely transforming a State, its power, its authority and its way of managing its people and its territory. One example is the process of decentralization in Morocco and the changes that have taken place in the country since independence. The current phase involves introducing advanced regionalization as part of the implementation of the 2011 Constitution.

Challenges of anchoring democracy, organization and good public governance at the local level

10. Apart from taking into account the specific context in every country, the question of decentralization encounters another set of challenges intrinsic to local and regional governments, such as the nature of their leadership; the existence of a genuine vision and strategic planning across their territory; the entrenchment of a culture of citizen participation and genuine participatory democracy; an ability to adapt to a multi-stakeholder and multilevel governance context; the mainstreaming of the principles of good governance and concerns relating to diversity, gender, disability, minorities, risk and resilience; the role of information and communications technologies; the structure, organization, management and operation of local governance in terms of institutions, services, systems, structures, machinery and processes, behaviours, practices and relationships, internal communications and relationships with the environment; and the role of partnership, cooperation and networking in local vision and governance.

11. The key challenges for local and regional governments, especially in African and other developing countries, include weaknesses and limitations of local public administration, deficits and poor governance of local institutions and structures, insufficient or non-existent local public services, and the positioning and situation of the human capital that is supposed to translate laws and infrastructure into reality and transform the vision and political agenda of local elected officials into actual development activities.

Impact of decentralization and local governance on land-use planning, the people's living conditions and sustainable development

12. The process of establishing, supporting and shoring up decentralization and local governance is by definition political, complex, risky and, above all, expensive. Strong local government should be viewed by all State bodies, without exception, as key to a country's stability and the sustainable development of society. However, many decentralization-related reforms remain the preserve of central governments, which retain authority over the decentralized entities. This is often indicative of the sort of decentralization that is only achieved through laws, elections, procedures and strict oversight, and merely amounts to importing foreign models, often with

external technical assistance, without regard for the reality on the ground, without a participatory and inclusive approach, and above all without operational continuity, much less capitalization.

13. A public policy on sustainable decentralization must be evaluated on the basis of its impact, not only on national and territorial development in terms of land use, infrastructure, facilities and services, competitiveness and attractiveness, but also on sustainable development. The role played by decentralization in the success of local governance must be an integral part of any State-adopted decentralization policy, it must be assessed using effectiveness, efficiency and impact appraisal tools, and must be periodically evaluated as a public policy mobilizing public efforts and funds.

14. Despite these institutional and practical bottlenecks, and in spite of the upheavals conflicts and flows of displaced people of the last few years, it is worth emphasizing the significant progress made in the areas of decentralization and local governance throughout the world, and the existence of many good practices worthy of being disseminated and shared. In the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, for instance, local and regional government spending accounts for approximately one third of public spending and approximately 70 per cent of public investment.¹ In Africa, where these processes are designed as policy choices that support democratization and local and territorial development, the conditions are very favourable for the entrenchment of decentralization in the political culture, with significant advances and promising trends having been observed.²

The challenge of rapid urbanization

15. A major global problem, urbanization is currently the greatest challenge for States, local and regional governments and other actors involved in the development process. Among its causes are demographic transitions and shifts, societal changes, climate change, economic and technological progress, migratory movements, and the impacts and effects of crises and conflicts.

16. Since 2014, 54.1 per cent of humankind has been living in urban areas, compared to 30 per cent in the 1950s, and estimates are as high as 60 per cent for 2030 and 66 per cent for 2050. This is a global shift that of course brings with it enormous benefits and opportunities. However, it is also a model which will have major consequences for the environment and social development. States are the first to be affected, but it is in fact local and regional governments which are on the front lines and therefore more affected. They are in direct daily contact with citizens, communities, businesses, minorities and refugees, among others. Urbanization poses

¹ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Sharing Responsibilities and Resources among Levels of Government: Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals", conference paper by Paul Smoke and Hamish Nixon prepared for the fifteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration, 2016. Available at the following location: <http://workspace.unpan.org/sites/Internet/Documents/UNPAN95873.pdf>.

² United Cities and Local Governments, *Decentralization and local democracy in the world*, Africa chapter (2008). Available at the following location: http://www.cities-localgovernments.org/gold/Upload/gold-report/02_africa_en.pdf.

multidimensional problems for local and regional governments which are often unaware of these problems, or lack the resources and capabilities needed to resolve them.

17. The rapid urbanization of many cities in developing countries, particularly in Africa, has also led to the growth of slums and substandard housing, obliging municipalities to act and interact at various levels simultaneously: they must develop strategic urban plans for infrastructure, public services and urban transport, make cities sustainable, prevent the growth of slums and work with slum-dwellers to improve their living conditions and provide them with minimum basic services, to cite just a few examples.³ In essence, it is in cities that the battle for sustainable development will be won or lost.⁴

III. Involvement and responsibility of local and regional governments in global agendas

Promotion of an inclusive and participatory approach at all levels among all actors and stakeholders

18. On 25 September 2015, the States Members of the United Nations adopted the 17 Sustainable Development Goals comprising the post-2015 development agenda which, to be a success at the local level, will require an unwavering, universal commitment to local governance.

19. It should be recalled that local and regional governments were not truly involved in the Millennium Development Goals negotiation and implementation processes, although many areas covered by those Goals fall under the authority of local. The lack of local ownership of the Goals and the insufficiency of local resources to achieve them were identified as being among the major weaknesses of the Goals.

20. Taking into account the lessons learned from that experience, and the changes and transitions that have taken place in the international community, including in the area of democracy and local governance, thanks to the commitment and mobilization of local and regional government networks, stakeholders prepared, negotiated and adopted this agenda on the basis of unprecedented levels of global consultation and dialogue. Their participatory and inclusive approach represented a substantial achievement for all of them, encapsulated in the new slogan "Leave no one behind". Several initiatives have helped to entrench this inclusive approach in the preparation and negotiation process in support of local and regional governments. One such initiative was the establishment of the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments for the Post-2015 Development Agenda towards Habitat III, which played a key role in mobilizing, informing and educating local

³ United Cities and Local Governments, "Sustainable Development Goals: What Local Governments Need to Know" (2015). Available at the following location: https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/the_sdgs_what_localgov_need_to_know_0.pdf.

⁴ United Nations Organization, report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda, "A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development" (2013), p. 20.

and regional governments, their associations and urban communities to participate in the formulation of the Sustainable Development Goals. The process led not only to the inclusion of local issues and local actors in the sustainable development agenda, but also to the adoption of Goal 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable), the participation of local and regional governments in joint stewardship of the localization of the Goals, as well as the promotion of cities' visibility at global conferences held in 2015 and 2016. Moreover, the members of United Cities and Local Governments have committed to contributing actively to the new global partnership between international institutions, national governments, local and regional governments, civil society and the private sector, and to using the international platforms to promote local action as an engine for development.

All the Sustainable Development Goals are local

Sustainable Development Goals

21. A renewed global partnership calls for the genuine involvement, accountability and participation of local and regional governments in this new inclusive global process, in close collaboration with the Governments of Member States, and alongside other actors and stakeholders. Local and regional governments, being key players owing to their roles, responsibilities, powers and proximity to citizens, local communities and the business community, are heavily involved in the pursuit of all the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 targets, for example in combating poverty and hunger throughout the world, ensuring access to basic services, addressing inequalities, building peaceful and inclusive societies, protecting human rights, implementing gender equality and establishing prosperity and peace worldwide.

22. Sustainable Development Goal 11 is the only Goal based on a subnational approach, and represents an unprecedented advance towards the recognition of the role that local and regional governments have to play in the Agenda. Local and regional governments have a part to play in achieving all of its targets: strategic and participatory planning, the establishment of sustainable linkages between urban, suburban and rural zones, access to housing, public transport, the protection and safeguarding of the world's cultural and natural heritage, climate change, natural disasters, the creation of green spaces and safe public spaces, and the construction of sustainable and resilient buildings using local materials.

23. As public institutions, they are also involved in the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16: combating all forms of violence, particularly in urban spaces, reducing corruption and unethical practices, establishing effective, accountable and transparent institutions, entrenching dynamic, open, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making processes, ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms.

New Urban Agenda

24. Alongside other levels of government and stakeholders, local and regional governments are involved in and committed to the entire New Urban Agenda that was the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). Some national and local governments have even enshrined principles known as the "right to the city" in their legislation, political declarations and charters, thus creating a new vision of cities for all, where all present and future inhabitants are able, without any form of discrimination, to live in and make cities that are fair, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable.

25. The entire text of the New Urban Agenda engages and affects local and regional governments as hubs and drivers of balance and sustainable urban and territorial development that is integrated at all levels. They are fully involved in the process, starting with the transparent and accountable definition and implementation of inclusive and effective urban legislation and policies on sustainable urban development, participatory planning and management, coordination, cooperation in the provision of social and basic services for all, the interface between all relevant stakeholders, and consideration of the Agenda.

Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

26. Local and regional governments and the most vulnerable cities are often on the front lines when it comes to preventing, adapting to or combating the effects of climate change, and raising the awareness of the population from the bottom of the income scale. They have thus rightly grasped the universal scope of the Paris Agreement, which set up an architecture for the new climate regime. They have also grasped the decisive progress that has been made thanks to the Agreement in raising awareness of the shared destiny of the whole of humankind in the face of the negative impacts that have already been generated and of the risk of further climate disruptions and related disasters if climate warming is not kept below 2°C and preferably 1.5°C by the year 2100.⁵ They have also supported and associated themselves with all the commitments made, which would be contingent on broad mobilization, advocacy, exchange of best practices, establishment of partnerships, and resource mobilization.

27. Regarding implementation, local and regional governments are affected by all the provisions of the Paris Agreement, especially in the areas of mitigation, adaptation, loss and damage, financing, technology development and transfer, transparency in operations and support, capacity-building or follow-up and evaluation mechanisms.

⁵ Cotonou Declaration adopted as the outcome of the work of the African Cities and Territories Preparatory Forum for the twenty-second Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, on the theme "African cities and territories, unavoidable stakeholders in the implementation of the international agenda on climate change", held in Cotonou, Benin, from 8 to 10 September 2016.

28. In short, the new global agendas are closely linked to the everyday work and concerns of local and regional governments. Beyond implementation, local and regional governments are responsible for policies, are vectors of change and represent the level of government best placed to tie the global Goals to local communities and realities on the ground, just as "cities and territories are where women and men, girls and boys, live, where they work to create their livelihoods and where dreams are made. They are where poverty and inequalities are tackled, where health and education services are provided, where ecosystems are protected, and human rights must be guaranteed".⁶

IV. Main reform pathways to move from global commitments to the implementation and achievement of results at the local level

29. Public institutions remain key to maintaining peace, security, order and political stability in order to safeguard the public interest and create favourable conditions for economic growth and social cohesion. Nevertheless, the State, in the conventional political and institutional sense, cannot and can no longer do everything, decide everything, plan everything, govern everything, finance everything and manage everything on its own and from the centre. Moreover, in a State that intervenes in all areas, society, citizens, communities and the business community are caught up in a morass of regulations, red tape, fees and redistributions. The result is less freedom, initiative, commitment, involvement and entrepreneurship and paves the way for the creation of an environment characterized by a reliance on handouts, immobility, dependency, citizen disengagement and even inertia. The need for decentralization can best be grasped when there is a strong State with a centre that aggregates, consolidates, coordinates, directs, integrates, regulates and supports. However, as the predominant system of public governance, the nation State has actually become increasingly incompatible with contemporary realities, which are characterized by the emergence of multi-stakeholder and multilevel governance.

30. The international community and Member States have decided that local and regional governments must be key actors in the implementation of the above-mentioned agendas, but translating those commitments into reality cannot be done without proper forethought. On the contrary, it is a long-term task. It is therefore urgent to empower, support and equip local and regional governments and communities in order to turn them into reliable partners committed to sustainable development. For that purpose, at least the following reforms will be required.

A gradual turn towards minimal, subsidiary and strategizing States

31. Establishing institutions that are effective, accountable and open to all means moving more and more towards a "helmsman" State, with a central Government that performs the tasks that only it can perform and that it is best placed to perform. It

⁶ United Cities and Local Governments.

delegates the other tasks to other stakeholders and intermediaries such as local and regional governments and business and community processes, and intervenes — and only in a secondary capacity — only when an issue cannot be resolved or best resolved by such intermediaries. Comprehensive reorganization of institutions and of the exercise of power and political, economic and administrative authority is therefore required as part of the management of a country's affairs, with the involvement of all actors and stakeholders. Such reorganization, which is based on participatory interaction between the Government and the citizenry, would require a harmonious framework incorporating a number of parameters that benefit a range of actors and governance levels connected by a system of values, roles, responsibilities, rights, duties and interests. Such reorganization would inevitably give rise to both divisions and disputes, in particular when it comes to distinguishing between the national interest and local or regional interests for resource-sharing. Indeed, governance is not simply about government as an institution; it is also about decision-making and all those who are affected by those decisions. The State should therefore change the way it governs by redirecting and refocusing its efforts in the following main directions:

(a) Becoming involved and contributing positively, in the international community, to promoting peace, stability, solidarity and development at the global level;

(b) Establishing and consolidating a stable environment that fosters political, economic and social trust, guarantees macroeconomic stability and enables, promotes and facilitates sustainable development, socialization and empowerment, with a view to gradually preparing other actors to take the helm;

(c) Reviewing the nature of the State, depending on the vision, the current context and the level of development and capacities, choosing a judicious mix of (i) the model of the police State; this model is useful in situations of insecurity, counter-terrorism, conflict or post-conflict and restoration of order and trust; (ii) the model of a State that performs only sovereign functions, as in a federal system; (iii) the model of a welfare State that is still useful in some countries to address human development challenges in order to ensure social cohesion; and (iv) the model of the minimal, strategizing and subsidiary State. The reality of public institutions and the selected model is reflected in particular in the composition of parliaments and governments, the number of ministerial departments, the share of public expenditure in the gross domestic product (GDP) in comparison with spending by private citizens or businesses, the role of the public sector in the machinery of the State and the government payroll as a proportion of GDP. In the context of the Sustainable Development Goals, the minimal State is deprecated and the welfare State is asserting itself once again. Countries that perform best in improving living standards are those that rejected the model of the minimal State from the start. There is therefore a renewed debate with the call to leave no one behind, and States have had to review their welfare policies and institutions to ensure better governance, integration, consistency and convergence of public policies and better targeting of the affected actors, categories and persons;

(d) Undertaking comprehensive and bold reforms and transforming the national and local public sector in a sustainable manner; in other words, making deliberate changes to the structures and processes of public sector organizations

with the objective of getting them to run better, to provide quality services and to be more efficient in terms of cost, targeting, adaptability, accessibility and convenience and, most of all, to achieve results that meet the needs, expectations and priorities of citizens and communities. Structural change may include merging or splitting public sector organizations, or even abolishing them completely, while process change may include redesigning systems, simplifying or abolishing procedures, modernizing human resources management, using contracts to hire employees, setting quality standards, integrating performance indicators, introducing information and communications technologies and promoting electronic administration, training, capacity-building and skills development, operational continuity and capitalization;

(e) Rethinking and transforming leadership in public institutions at all levels as a key factor in setting an example, choosing a way forward, defining needs and priorities, and most of all entrenching a culture of ethical public good governance in accordance with Sustainable Development Goal 16;

(f) Promoting ownership of the various sustainable development agendas by various actors and levels of government through the dissemination of information, awareness-raising, dissemination, simplification, adaptation, integration, sharing, communication, participation, dialogue and cooperation, using all available means, including information and communications technologies and social networks;

(g) Acknowledging that local and regional governments have a broad mandate when it comes to the development of the territories they govern and the well-being of citizens and communities, in parallel with the roles and responsibilities entrusted to them by the State. They will thus have the authority, autonomy, legitimacy and means they need to put in place development strategies that dovetail with the Sustainable Development Goals and the needs, vision and national priorities of the State;

(h) Promoting novel national doctrines, policies and strategies to support and assist local and regional governments while giving priority to national stewardship, strategic coordination, facilitation and empowerment. This should go hand-in-hand with efforts to ensure that local and regional governments have the tools they need by providing them with appropriate and adapted services and strengthening the regulatory, integration, standardization, supervision and oversight functions;

(i) Implementing a coherent and integrated national strategy to promote a culture of responsibility, transparency and accountability at all levels and for all actors.

Supporting, guiding and promoting the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals

32. For the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), localizing development should not be seen as "a translation of global policies within local contexts, but rather as a process based on the empowerment of local stakeholders, aimed at making sustainable development more responsive and therefore relevant to local needs, aspirations and lives through sustained exchanges between global, national and local facets. All partners in the effort — governments at all levels, civil society, private sector, development agencies — will need to work closely together

to ensure steady progress on the bold, ambitious and transformative development agenda.⁷ For United Cities and Local Governments, it is vitally important to "[take] into account sub-national contexts, challenges, opportunities and governments at all stages of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, from the setting of goals and targets, to determining the means of implementation and using indicators to monitor progress",⁸ along with experiential learning.

33. Drawing on the outcomes of global discussions on the local implementation of the 2030 Agenda, and as part of its work to support local and regional governments, United Cities and Local Governments is collaborating with UNDP and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) to develop a toolkit for localizing the Sustainable Development Goals. The main tools of the kit are outlined below.

Table 1

Initializing the Sustainable Development Goals process

Raising awareness	Diagnostics	Strategies and plans	Monitoring and evaluation
Enabling institutional arrangements for implementation of the Goals			
Multilevel governance	Territorial/multi-stakeholder approach	Accountability	Development cooperation effectiveness
Capacity-strengthening			

34. The work would also entail:

(a) Drafting a comprehensive flow chart of global, national and local or regional agendas, for each Goal and target, showing the roles and responsibilities of each actor involved in the process and the resources available to them;

(b) Having each country identify its priorities in terms of the Goals that must be met and supported;

(c) Taking account of the variety and diversity of country-specific contexts and policies (e.g. development and capacity levels, characteristics of the territorial architecture, status of the decentralization process, performance of local and regional governments, classification of cities, the needs of rural, landlocked or island communities, and the situation of countries in conflict or post-conflict situations or in democratic transition);

⁷ UNDP, *Integrated Framework to Support Local Governance and Local Development*, March 2016. Available from http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Local%20Governance/Integrated_Framework_LGLD.pdf download.

⁸ United Cities and Local Governments, *How to Localize Targets and Indicators of the Post-2015 Development Agenda*, November 2014. Available from https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/localization_targets_indicator_web.pdf.

(d) Conducting an in-depth analysis of the division and transfer of powers and responsibilities both horizontally, between sectoral authorities, and vertically. This must be based on clear and relevant principles and mechanisms with which to identify the actor(s) and the level(s) of power, authority, governance and responsibility that can ensure accountable, effective, efficient, rational, timely, compliant, transparent and results-based implementation of the Goals. The frameworks and modalities for collaboration, partnership and cooperation, including with respect to shared responsibilities and resource allocation, should also be determined;

(e) Dividing the various global agendas into national systems or agendas that incorporate enabling policy frameworks at all levels, integrated strategic plans and effective means of implementation. These systems and agendas must also include the encouragement of international cooperation and partnerships, the sharing of best practices and the allocation of the necessary resources to address critical concerns. It is also important to create, promote and enhance open, user-friendly and participatory data platforms for the transfer and sharing of knowledge and to ensure efficiency and transparency through e-governance and approaches assisted by information and communications technologies. In all this, there must be flexibility in the design of plans, policies and programmes aimed at responding to national, central, local and regional needs, using diverse approaches to local governance and development.

Sufficient access to resources, financing and investment for local and regional governments

35. The State and central administrations are usually the highest consumers of resources, financing and investment. Yet the powers of this level of government are meant to be clearly defined and limited to sovereign duties and to stewardship, standardization, integration, regulation and oversight at the national level. The success of local and regional governments in this regard is contingent on:

(a) State intervention in the form of public funding, which is vital for maintaining peace, law and order and stability, and provision of basic infrastructure, services and equipment to ensure adequate development and accessibility throughout the country. This is particularly applicable to developing, emerging, vulnerable and landlocked countries, and countries in conflict or post-conflict situations or in democratic transition;

(b) A more equitable and transparent distribution of resources and investments between the State and local and regional governments, and between urban and rural areas, together with a transfer of powers and responsibilities;

(c) The promotion of an enabling environment for local and regional governments through effective and efficient financial decentralization, improvement or improvement of local and regional finances, and a gradual shift towards locally sourced capital that would empower local actors, with fewer transfers from the State. In this regard, United Cities and Local Governments recommends that local resources should be equivalent to 20 per cent of national resources by the end of this decade. This could be achieved by establishing an overarching body for monitoring

local finances that would be responsible for evaluation, follow-up and assistance in the area of fiscal reform, and the provision of transparent financial databases with a view to promoting accountability and improving the relationship of trust with investors;

(d) Better access to funding and new funding mechanisms, including through sustainable partnerships for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, as well as better targeting of official development assistance⁹ and good governance of development cooperation;

(e) The promotion and effective implementation of responsibility, transparency and accountability in local finance, fiscal and property matters.

Structuring, strengthening and equipping local and regional governments

36. In implementing Sustainable Development Goal 16, and given its centrality in the 2030 Agenda as a whole, States' efforts to build effective, accountable and transparent institutions should not be restricted to the central government; local and regional institutions and urban centres must also play their part. For example, structuring, equipping, updating and computerizing civil registry services would greatly enhance the implementation of the Goals, in particular as regards the registration of births and deaths, mapping of school zones and health facilities and statistics. Adopting a code of ethics on local governance and subsequently disseminating it and raising awareness of its contents, promoting the right to access information locally, and protecting fundamental freedoms would all have the same effect.

37. It is necessary to act now to upgrade, professionalize, motivate, train and build the capacity of human resources at the local level. In order to address current challenges and implement the 2030 Agenda, particularly in developing, emerging and vulnerable countries and countries that are in crisis, local and regional governments and cities must be leading the effort. However, most of the time, local and regional leaders emphasize the need to improve their financial resource capacity but rarely mention the critical issue of their human resources. Human resources are one of the most crucial prerequisites for the success of the decentralization and local governance process, and for the position of local and regional governments as key actors in these agendas. There is therefore an urgent need to address the issue of human resources and their positioning, expertise, skills and professionalization.

38. At this level, human resources encounter a multitude of challenges that have rarely been the subject of research, analysis, evaluation or enduring reforms. In fact, in most local public sector reforms human resources issues are marginalized. According to United Cities and Local Governments — Africa, African local

⁹ See the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development and the sub-national financing mechanisms outlined therein; and United Cities and Local Governments, Position paper on aid effectiveness and local government, 2009, available from http://effectivecooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Local-governments-and-aid-effectiveness_en_uclg_position_paper_final.pdf.

authorities must consider the complexity and intertwined nature of the challenges that they currently face, and take steps to:

(a) Initiate a permanent, continuous and sustainable process of awareness-raising, training and professional capacity-building for local elected officials and local and regional government staff, considering them an investment to be included in these entities' investment budgets and factored into their long-term planning rather than treated as an annual operating expense, as often happens;

(b) Adopt a long-term outlook and vision in this area, as part of an approach founded on the ongoing consolidation of achievements;

(c) Ensure that the long-term outlook does not obscure the need to act urgently, and the concomitant need for a strategic approach that combines an emergency response with the roll-out of training and capacity-building measures that can provide an enduring solution to the challenge of human resource development at the local level;

(d) Take into account the worrying change in the status of public sector jobs, which are heavily devalued and no longer the first career choice for young people entering the labour market, particularly at the local level. It is essential to create a more incentivizing and attractive framework, without sacrificing the requirement of ethical conduct in the public sector;

(e) Develop holistic, integrated and coherent medium- and long-term national strategies for training, capacity-building and skills development for the benefit of local elected officials and territorial civil servants that take into account issues of diversity, gender, disability and illiteracy, while guaranteeing the means and funding needed for their implementation, monitoring, evaluation and impact measurement;

(f) Accord greater attention to the establishment of a communities of practice and expertise through peer learning, study trips, exchanges of best practices and professional networking;

(g) View all training and capacity-building as part of a process of lifelong experiential learning, to ensure continuous, flexible professional development that is capable of driving change;

(h) Identify appropriate areas for awareness-raising, training and capacity-building related to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for different actors and levels of government;¹⁰

(i) Develop a revitalized educational system based on teacher training, learning packages, toolkits, case studies, role-playing games and good practices, online learning platforms, tutoring, mentoring and sponsorship, while taking cultural diversity into account;

(j) Disseminating, particularly at the local and regional government level, the standards of excellence for the training of public administration officials

¹⁰ Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "Sharing responsibilities and resources among levels of government: localizing the Sustainable Development Goals", p. 24.

developed in 2008 by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the International Association of Schools and Institutes of Administration;

(k) Adopt, ratify and implement agendas, charters and codes of ethics, and promote the values of good governance. Examples in Africa include Agenda 2063 of the African Union: The Africa we want, the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development of June 2014 and the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration of January 2011.

Integration, harmonization, coordination and coherence of initiatives in support of local implementation of sustainable development agendas

39. A salient factor that impeded the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals was the chaotic proliferation — especially in developing countries and in African countries — of initiatives to support Member States, local and regional governments and civil society. These initiatives were taken by multilateral institutions, regional multilateral institutions, national funding agencies, private foundations and national, regional and international associations of local and regional governments, with no strategic vision or emphasis on knowledge-sharing, and throughout, national governments sat back and allowed events to run their course.

40. Effective, efficient and sustainable implementation of the 2030 Agenda, particularly in a time of crises and scarce resources, requires a radical transformation of the processes through which support and assistance are provided to local and regional governments, and also requires national governments to take matters back in hand.

41. The UNDP initiative in partnership with the United Nations Volunteers and the United Nations Capital Development Fund stands out among the initiatives undertaken in 2016 and deserves special attention: it should be disseminated and taken up by all actors and at all levels of government. It is the integrated framework for supporting local governance and local development at the country programme level, with a view to improving the quality of life of local people and building resilient relations State-society relations, based on the inputs and outputs listed in the table below:

Table 2

<i>Six key inputs from the local governance system</i>	<i>Six main outputs of a successful integrated approach</i>
The facilitation of democratic accountability	Local and regional associations empowered with meaningful autonomy and embedded in effective accountability networks
Strengthening rule of law and security	Equitable and effective delivery of goods and services

<i>Six key inputs from the local governance system</i>	<i>Six main outputs of a successful integrated approach</i>
The development of necessary administrative capacity for development management and service delivery	Inclusive decision-making processes involving women and men
The facilitation of necessary fiscal empowerment and resources	A secure environment where the rule of law prevails
The availability of spatial information	The sustainable use and management of natural resources
The crucial acceleration of social capital formation	Increased economic opportunities (and jobs) for women and men

42. The implementation of this process requires multidimensional capacities, including the capacity for steering a national visioning process, the capacity for sector development planning, the capacity for steering the subnational development planning process, the capacity to engage in territorial partnerships and exchanges, the capacity for fostering social cohesion and managing heterogeneous societies, knowledge management and advocacy, and providing capacity support under UNDP programming context.¹¹

43. Given the above, it is necessary to carry out a preliminary survey of all the similar initiatives developed to date, to ensure their harmonization, coherence and integration, and to put an end to “reinventing the wheel” to reduce costs and, most importantly, to make them accessible to local and regional governments and their national associations and networks, with due consideration for their diversity.

44. In conclusion, every country requires a strong State. Its two fundamental pillars must be the rule of law and democracy; it must be accountable, competent, transparent, capable of regulating and resilient, in order to build a nation characterized by stability and solidarity. The State must, on the one hand, gradually seek to establish a democracy that fosters the widest possible participation in the management of public affairs of local significance, and, on the other, guarantee the administrative effectiveness and efficiency that should characterize any public service, whether national or local, without losing sight of the fact that successful decentralization is dependent on a strong State.

45. In addition to institutional and process reforms, decentralization and local governance are more works in progress than completed agendas. They are genuinely open-ended projects requiring continuous action, building, adjustment, regulation, adjudication, correction and capitalization. In this connection, time is of the essence. Any efforts to that end must include both swift, focused, efficient, effective and practical action capable of attracting the support of an increasingly demanding population whose expectations will only become higher, and steady, long-term

¹¹ UNDP, “Integrated Framework to Support Local Governance and Local Development”, pp. 17-21.

action that will ensure the durability of the reforms necessary for the achievement of sustainable development in its three dimensions by 2030.

46. To reconcile these two approaches, we believe some fundamental recommendations must be followed:

(a) Prepare and consolidate a favourable, enabling and facilitating environment for decentralization in support of local governance and sustainable development in its three dimensions;

(b) Ensure coherence between global agendas, national strategies and priorities, and local and regional strategies and priorities;

(c) Identify roles and responsibilities and allocate the necessary resources to each actor and level of government;

(d) Strengthen, support and consolidate local and regional governments and their associations and networks, to make them strong, dynamic actors with autonomy, responsibility, skills, powers and resources;

(e) Strengthen local and regional administrations and invest in their human capital;

(f) Invest in electronic governance as a means of establishing transparent institutions and improving the quality of services;

(g) Retain decentralization, local governance and local public administration as priority areas on the international agenda over the next few years.